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Home Buy Out Program in Ft. Wayne Turns to Junk Ditch Area

Story Published: Feb 11, 2008 at 11:24 PM EST

Story Updated: Feb 11, 2008 at 11:24 PM EST

By Jeff Neumeyer

One of the biggest headaches in any flood is when water threatens to invade and ruin people's homes.

The City of Fort Wayne is pushing forward with a campaign to try and reduce that flooding nightmare.

The city is targeting more properties as potential buy-outs.

The area near the Junk Ditch on the City's near West Side is taking top priority.

Anytime we have significant flooding, homes around the Junk Ditch battle problems with high water.

The city's Director of Public Works and others cruised through that area Monday, evaluating which homes are in the worst danger of flooding.

Over the past few years, the city has purchased and demolished about 60 flood prone homes.

City officials are trying to get away from relying on federal dollars to do future home buy-outs.

Bob Kennedy/Public Works Director: " Several years ago, after the 2005 flood, we did a local storm water bond that allowed us to put \$500,000 of local money towards buying out problem areas like this every year. So, we're still utilizing that \$500,000 and trying to match federal grants when we get federal grants also."

The city would like to buy out another 150 property owners over the next few years, provided it can come up with enough money to do so.

The buy-outs to date have been taking place on Westbrook Drive along Spy Run Creek, the Calhoun-Tillman area, and the Park-Thompson neighborhood along the St. Mary's River.

The city is also building up dikes near Foster Park so flood threatened homes can remain standing in some areas.

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Flood Waters in Fort Wayne area Going Down

Story Published: Feb 11, 2008 at 5:55 PM EST

Story Updated: Feb 11, 2008 at 5:55 PM EST

By Peter Neumann

Fort Wayne, IN- Some city streets and intersections are reopening at 5 p.m. today as standing water throughout the city continues to go down.

The following locations are reopening:

- Calhoun and Tillman
- Winchester Road between Bluffton and Airport Expressway
- 1700 block of Catalpa
- Taylor east of Freeman

Smith Road at Covington is closed as well as Taylor between Portage and Freeman.

Drivers should continue to avoid areas with high water and not drive around barricades.

City crews worked throughout the day to clear streets of water and ice. Front-end loaders worked in the Junk Ditch area moving out accumulated ice. Water was still underneath much of the ice so crews will continue to try to clear the water as it turns to ice.

Public Works Director Bob Kennedy and some of his staff were in the Junk Ditch area Monday evaluating damage and evaluating homes for voluntary buyouts.

"The choice to sell is always the homeowner's," Kennedy said. "We don't force people from their homes. Property owners can call in to get their names added to the list as the City prioritizes buy-out areas."

Those interested in buyouts should contact the City's 311 Call Center between 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday for more information.

Anyone with property damage due to the floods or high water, including flooded basements, is encouraged to report the damage to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

The Homeland Security Department's toll-free number is (866) 210-1925. The department is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Other flood-related questions should be directed to the City's 311 Call Center, which is open 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

River levels continued to drop from their highs late last week, but only the St. Joseph River at the former Roots location was below flood stage as of Monday afternoon.

Location --- Height in feet Monday afternoon --- Flood stage in feet

St. Mary's River at Muldoon 14.62 14
Maumee River at Coliseum 20.09 17

St. Joseph River at Roots 11.64 12
St. Joseph River in Newville 14.06 12
St. Mary's River in Decatur 18.75 17

Pumps remain in operation throughout the city even if there is no standing water at some locations. Pumps usually stay on until the river levels are below flood stage, city officials said, especially during cold weather to keep water from coming back up in the storm sewers, flooding streets and becoming ice.

Sewer maintenance crews continue to monitor the pumps around the clock.

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Published: February 12, 2008 6:00 a.m.

Floodwaters begin to fall

Riverhaven residents feel abandoned by Allen County officials

By Dan Stockman

Flood cleanup

Cleanup kits are available for anyone whose home has flooded.

American Red Cross: 484-9336, ext. 205

Salvation Army: 744-2311

Fort Wayne residents who have other flooding concerns can call 311.

Buyouts

Those interested in volunteering their flood-prone property for city buyouts should call 311 between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. for more information.

RIVERHAVEN – Melissa Moore shivers in her doorway as she looks over the icy expanse that is most of her yard, save a few feet near the house turned to frozen mud by the tramp of boots stacking the sandbags that ring the home like a fence.

The pickup truck in the driveway is laden with more sandbags that won't have to be used, but were on hand just in case.

The scene of most flood fighting brings the roar of pumps, the rumble of diesel trucks and the grunts of volunteers. In Riverhaven on Monday, the only sound was of the Maumee River rushing past like an angry root beer float – frigid brown water topped by snow and ice churning in the current – and the crack of ice covering streets and yards as the water slowly retreats from underneath it.

"There was no assistance out here," Moore said. "The only thing (the county) did was put up high water signs. ... We had to go clear to Taylor University to get sandbags."

As northeast Indiana shivered in single-digit temperatures and subzero wind-chills Monday, river levels continued to fall back toward flood stage, leaving behind vast sheets of ice.

In Riverhaven, the flood has also left behind angry residents.

Moore said she pays the same county taxes as everyone else in Allen County but was abandoned during the flood.

"It's like we're in our own little ghost town," Moore said. "We have to fend for ourselves out here."

Mike Green, spokesman for the Allen County commissioners, said the highway department posted high water signs and delivered empty sand bags and sand.

"I believe they tried to be as receptive to any concerns of the residents out there as the county can," Green said.

Charles Collins, whose Portola Avenue home is inaccessible because of high water – now giant slabs of ice – said he's used to Riverhaven's being ignored, but it's particularly galling when neighbors are being flooded out of their homes.

"There was no Red Cross, no nothin'," Collins said. "There's been no kinda volunteers out here whatsoever."

At least four homes were flooded out, and the residents may lose everything, he said.

"They can't hardly get flood insurance 'round here," Collins said. "A lotta people need help out here."

But Katherine MacAulay, director of preparedness and response for the American Red Cross, said people in Riverhaven are being helped. The agency has helped nine families in Allen County, seven of them in Riverhaven. The agency set up a service center in the unincorporated area between Fort Wayne and New Haven and is distributing cleanup kits.

"That's where the majority of our work has been," MacAulay said. "And we're not done. It's just the beginning of all this."

In Fort Wayne, officials spent the day opening streets and intersections by using front-end loaders to scrape and lift the frozen floodwaters out of the way of traffic.

In the Junk Ditch area, though, the ice was so thick the city borrowed a giant, six-wheel drive prototype truck to smash through, Director of Public Works Bob Kennedy said.

After that was done, he said, officials drove the entire area with an eye toward future buyouts.

"We're trying to prioritize the homes so we can purchase those in the most danger," Kennedy said.

Interested property owners can call the city to add their names to the list as city officials prioritize potential buyout areas, he said.

Though snow was forecast for Monday night, it was not expected to affect river levels. In general, one inch of snow equates to only one-tenth of an inch of rain, and river levels are falling across the region.

The St. Marys River in Fort Wayne did not reach its predicted crest of 18.4 feet, giving flood fighters some breathing room when it stayed below 17.7 feet. It also helped that the river took nearly a week to reach its apogee.

"The water came up very slow. It seemed like it took forever for the St. Marys to crest," Kennedy said. "The good thing is you have time to react to it, but it's long and drawn out for the people that have to deal with it."

In Noble County, where National Guardsmen had to help sandbag homes because of rising lake levels, the ice was causing new problems.

Michael Newton, Noble County's emergency management director, said it appeared his county's waterways have crested, but buildings that were surrounded by water could suffer further damage as the water freezes. Plus, the ice will keep officials from inspecting for flood damage.

"It's going to be awhile before we can get it assessed and figured out," Newton said.

Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security will be in Noble County this week to assess flood damage, Newton said. That assessment will determine whether the county will be declared a disaster area.

dstockman@jg.net *Becky Manley of The Journal Gazette contributed to this story.*

[**Back to Fort Wayne**](#)

Residents cite dams for flooding

By The Associated Press | Tuesday, February 12, 2008 | [No comments posted.](#)

MONTICELLO | Two severe floods within a month downstream from a pair of NIPSCO-owned dams have some homeowners saying the utility company failed to protect them.

The company, however, says heavy rains and melting snow caused record water flows on the Tippecanoe River and that its dams were not meant for flood control.

Pam Mansfield, who has owned property along the river for about 17 years, said had never experienced a flood like the one in January or last week. She said NIPSCO officials should have better managed the water being released from Oakdale and Norway dams.

"They knew the water was coming," Mansfield said. "We had snow, and the rain was forecast. Why didn't they let some water out?"

NIPSCO spokesman Jim Fitzer said the hydroelectric dams, which form lakes Freeman and Shafer about 20 miles north of Lafayette, are "run of the river" dams.

"Whatever water flow comes into the dam, we discharge from the dam," he said. "We don't have a reservoir for control, nor are we licensed for flood control."

Fitzer said that before this year's floods the record water flow for the dams was set in 1959, when the Oakdale dam topped out at just more than 22,000 cubic feet per second. In January's flood, that rate topped 30,000 cubic feet per second and flow peaked last week at nearly 26,000 cubic feet per second.

"I can't stress enough to the general public -- it's just the unbelievable volume of water that did this," Fitzer said.

The Tippecanoe River flooding swamped hundreds of homes in an area that was included within a major disaster declaration from President Bush stemming from the January damage.

Fitzer said the company has an automated call list, which residents can join to be notified of flood warnings. Residents are notified as the flow rate reaches each of the stages from flood watch, to flood warning to flood emergency.

"It's not in advance," he said. "It's when we hit those three levels."

Sherry Wagner, who lives just downstream from Oakdale Dam, hasn't returned home from the January flood. She said residents did not enough warning of the floodwaters either time.

"There may be reasons," Wagner said. "But it seems they could release, not 100 percent, but if they're being neighbor-friendly, 75 percent. It might have bought some time to get maybe a vehicle out."

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FEMA to check Benton County flood damage

STAFF REPORTS

February 11, 2008

Officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency will tour areas of Benton County on Wednesday to do a preliminary assessment of damage caused by flooding this month and last.

President Bush already made a federal disaster declaration and offered \$33 million in relief after the January floods damaged homes in a nine-county area, including Tippecanoe, Carroll, White and Jasper counties.

FEMA officials said homes and businesses damaged in this month's second round of flooding are also eligible for the federal aid. FEMA officials last week said they'd look at other counties that had damage but weren't included in the presidential declaration. Benton was not one of the counties.

"I'm glad to see they're reassessing the situation. Hopefully we'll get Benton County included in the disaster declaration," said Randy Kitterman, director of Benton's Emergency Management Agency.

Kitterman said about a dozen residents have turned in damage reports, mostly from flooded basements and appliance damage. He said the county highway department is also hoping to seek reimbursement for damage to washed out roads.

FEMA will also be touring areas of Noble and Kosciusko counties Wednesday.

[Back to Lafayette](#)



Ice jam causes flooding on Lake Shafer

STAFF REPORTS

February 12, 2008

MONTICELLO - An ice jam on Lake Shafer is leading to some flooding along the western leg of the lake, north of Indiana Beach.

According White County's deputy emergency management director Rose Brady, flooding is occurring in the areas of Stahl Road, Bedford Bay and other areas north of Indiana Beach along the lake's western leg.

An unknown number of homes have been affected, she said.

Evacuations have not been ordered. However, the Red Cross has established an emergency shelter at the First Assembly of God Church on Indiana 16 in Monon, she said.

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Congressman Visits Disaster Recovery Center

Updated: Feb 12, 2008 05:17 AM EST

Democratic Congressman Joe Donnelly visited a Disaster Recovery Center in Delphi. Flood victims can come face to face with representatives of FEMA, the IRS, Red Cross, and the Small Business Administration at the center. Donnelly said he is pleased to see FEMA officials in town. He said the clean-up is a team effort, and he wants to let people hit by the floods know he is there for them too.

"There's been tremendous damage to their houses and their lives. What I'm there for is to try to let them know you can count on us we'll be there for you," said Donnelly.

About 100 flood survivors have visited the Disaster Recovery Center set up in the Delphi Middle School Gymnasium since last Wednesday.

"They may come in a little bit anxious but I think they feel much better after talking to us," said Leo Skinner, FEMA External Affairs Officer.

He said after registering, applicants can find out what kind of assistance is available, and how much they can receive. He said people should not hesitate to see if they are eligible to receive aid.

Donnelly agreed. "If you're wondering whether or not you qualify, come back and find out, because there's a good chance you do," he said.

At the center, disaster victims can also complete an application with the Small Business Administration for a low-interest, long-term loan. The SBA encourages people to come into the center to get answers to their questions, get their applications completed, and turned in, so they can start the process for them. The center at the Delphi Middle School Gym is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., 7 days a week.

If you are too busy to visit the center, FEMA recommends you at least register, by calling toll-free 1-800-621-FEMA. Registration takes about 20 minutes.

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Monday, February 11, 2008

High water creates mess on river

Monday, February 11, 2008

Gary Gillespie, right, owner of the Madison Lighthouse Restaurant, attempted to dislodge driftwood and debris from the docks connected to his floating eatery. Gillespie said that to call the driftwood brought in by the high waters on the Ohio River a headache would be an understatement.

Alan Howard, below, pulled on a rope while helping Gillespie dislodge the driftwood.

Much of Indiana and Kentucky have been hit with flooding.

A boat crew rescued three adults and three children who were stranded on a pickup truck's roof in floodwaters in southern Indiana's Jackson County.

State police say the driver of the truck called for help Saturday night, saying water was in the cab as it was stuck on a county road near the White River outside Brownstown.

An Indiana conservation officers airboat reached the truck, which police say was being swept downstream. Those rescued were the driver and his wife, the couple's three children - ages 7, 5 and 4 - and another woman.

The rising waters will likely continue this week. From two to five inches of snow are expected in Southern Indiana tonight, followed by more rain and sleet tomorrow.

(Staff photos by Ken Ritchie)

[**Back to Madison**](#)

Herald Journal

Civic spirit helping to wash away flood woes

Donations of time, money, and goods has helped rebuilding process.

Doug Howard

Reporter

"People are very good, basically, at helping people," said Monticello City Council President Bill Smith of the ongoing, often grassroots efforts from White County and beyond to help those hit by two floods in less than a month so far this year.

"We've done a lot of work up here in White County and Monticello and it's a very dear place to us," said Todd Frauhiger, an engineer with CTE-Metcalf & Eddy in Indianapolis. "After the flooding situation, we contacted the emergency management and said what could we donate that could be the most helpful? And the first thing they suggested were power washers."

The second thing, he said, was groceries.

"We worked through the mayor's office and they put us in contact with the people here at the food pantry," said Frauhiger. "We asked them exactly what they needed and we were able to address the needs."

With that in mind, Frauhiger and Smith delivered a truckload of groceries for the White County Food Pantry on Monday, which has seen an increased need this month due to the two episodes of flooding over the past month. Started as a relief effort at the Horizons of Faith United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, Frauhiger took the challenge to his co-workers at CTE-Metcalf & Eddy.

The combined effort so far has netted enough funds to purchase two, 2,600 psi power washers based at the Monticello United Methodist Church to be loaned out expressly for the purpose of cleanup work, and over \$1,300 in groceries for the White County Food Pantry.

"The plan is they're going to loan those out like a library book," said Frauhiger of the power washers.

"The challenge is still ongoing," he said. "I think in about two or three more weeks, we'll have another \$200-\$300 worth of food to bring up."

At this point, requests for cleanup assistance are being handled through the White County United Way office, 1001 S. Main St. or by calling the office at 574 583-6544.

"We identify the need and then try to put volunteers with them," said Pastor Brian Beeks at the Monticello United Methodist Church, which serves as the home base for the power washers.

"I understand the reluctance to have a stranger come in and help you clean out," said Beeks. "And so it's gotta be when people are at the point that they want to invite others to come in and help them. If they don't have friends, if they don't have family, if they don't have someone who can help them out, there are volunteers that are willing to do that."

Beeks said the volunteer crews are also coordinating efforts through referrals by FEMA.

And White County EMA director Gordon Cochran is urging anyone with damage from either January's or February's flooding to register for assistance through FEMA and/or the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Anyone in the counties already designated in the initial federal disaster declaration - Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton,

Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White counties - should contact FEMA if they had damage due to floods that began Jan. 7 and haven't yet called, or sustained additional damage due to more recent floods, even if they contacted FEMA after initial flooding.

"If they don't register, we can't help them," said Cochran on Monday. "We've got a lot of people that have done the (preliminary) paperwork during the first flood that have never come around and registered (through FEMA) yet."

Residents affected by flooding can contact FEMA by calling (800) 621-FEMA (3362) or TTY (800) 462-7585 for the speech- or hearing-impaired from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week until further notice. Victims can access information online or can also register in person at FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers at 315 N. Main St. in Monticello, the middle school gym in Delphi at 210 High St. Delphi, or The Roy & Fern Tobias Center Library, 105 N. Ohio St. in Remington.

The centers are open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Sunday until further notice.

Losses to report can include structural damage to homes and loss of personal property. For a form to help you provide information, visit www.in.gov/dhs.

[Back to Monticello](#)



Article published Feb 12, 2008

Expert: Coverage is 'storm porn'

It's a fine line between caution and exaggeration for forecasts

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Predictions of an overnight storm packing as many as 10 inches of snow for parts of Indiana had some commuters concerned about their morning drive today.

Others, however, remembered how the last warnings of a big storm produced little in the way of precipitation.

Some say broadcast meteorologists exaggerate storms to boost ratings, but forecasters say they would rather err on the side of caution -- especially when severe weather threatens.

"Basically, we just have to analyze the range of possibilities and try to reflect that in our forecast," said Dan Hawblitzel, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Wilmington, Ohio. "We always keep in mind the possibilities of nothing happening to something unexpected happening in the other direction.

"It really depends because when you overforecast you run the risk of calling wolf," he said. "And then of course you don't want to be stuck with a big event that catches the public off guard and unprepared."

Neither does Mike Sharp of Richmond. The Wayne County Highway Department supervisor remembers the most recent warnings of a big storm fizzled, but also recalls when a prediction of mere flurries turned into several inches of the powdery stuff.

He wants his fleet alert for anything and said the night shift would report to work at 6 p.m. Monday.

"Our crews and trucks prepare in the same way, whether they're saying we'll get 10 inches or just a dusting," he said. "We're ready to go."

If a big storm hits, Sharp said, the night crew will evaluate and watch the conditions, then call him in for further action if necessary.

But other forecasters say there's no need to hyperbolize weather reports.

"The idea that we're sensationalizing the weather just makes me shake my head," said Wayne Hart, WEHT-News25 in Evansville. "The weather's been doing enough on its own without any help from us."

The forecast Monday evening for overnight and into today might be a good example. Even though some weather predictions call for 6 to 10 inches of snow, Hawblitzel said Richmond might be spared.

"There's a potential bust factor," he said. "... It is possible that the heavier snow hits areas south of Richmond."

Jeff Lyons, the chief meteorologist of public safety at 14-WFIE in Evansville, said his job to make sure people are prepared.

"Weather coverage is a matter of public safety, and when there's a tornado warning, there aren't any decisions to make," Lyons said. "Going wall-to-wall is a done deal."

He referred to TV coverage of severe weather that sometimes pre-empts regular programming.

David Phillips, senior climatologist for Environment Canada, calls the nonstop coverage "storm porn," and said it inflates public anxieties about weather events.

Last week Indiana was hit with several major storms that included a tornado in Bloomfield and heavy rain and melting snow that caused major rivers to flood. Officials think dense fog contributed to six deaths in the northwestern part of the state.

In the South, more than 50 people died last week in some of the worst tornadoes to hit in two decades.

But a storm system that was supposed to dump 6 to 8 inches of snow on the Indianapolis area last week left a little more than an inch of slush as a low pressure system shifted north, leaving local television broadcasters dispatched to cover the snowfall little to report.

[**Back to Richmond**](#)



Published: February 11, 2008 11:51 pm

Father, son rescued from boat in flooded field

Warnings also issued for flooded roads

By Howard Greninger

The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE — A father and son stranded in an aluminum boat over a flooded field near the Wabash River battled cold temperatures before rescue workers pulled them to safety Sunday.

Robert J. Peters, 50, and his son, Cody R. Peters, were trying to cross a flooded field in a 15-foot aluminum boat when their motor stalled and would not restart. The Peters' home, in the 12000 block of South Giffle Place, near a levee of the Wabash River, had been surrounded by flood waters for several days. The father was trying to get his son to his grandmother's home to celebrate the son's 15th birthday party, said Indiana Conservation Officer Max Winchell.

Rescuers were called for assistance about 3:15 p.m. High winds had pushed the stalled boat into a row of trees, which resembled a small island, Winchell said. State conservation officers and members of the Sugar Creek Fire Department's swift water rescue team rescued the pair.

The flooded field was 4 to 5 feet deep in parts, 2 to 3 feet in other areas, said Darrick Scott, assistant fire chief of the Sugar Creek Fire Department. Scott was involved in the rescue.

"The water temperature was very cold, freezing," Winchell said. "There was corn stubble that normally is in the fields that floated to the top. It was 40 to 50 yards wide at one point and it was all frozen. When they tried to get through that, their motor died and they were at the mercy of the wind."

Peters was unable to get a signal on his cell phone for about three hours, but finally was able to call a cousin, who tried to reach them in a second boat, Winchell said, but was unsuccessful because of strong winds and ice.

A nearby resident noticed the boats and called for help.

Sugar Creek and the conservation officers launched boats from McNutt Drive to reach the two. "We could not get to their boat, so we had them walk along some of the trees to a nearby bridge, then picked them up," Winchell said.

Sugar Creek personnel took the son, while Winchell took the father in his boat.

"The current was pretty heavy, with debris and ice," Scott said.

Scott said the Vigo County Emergency Management Agency already had contacted residents in the area to see if they needed any supplies or medication, or needed to get out.

"I cannot stress this enough, if someone needs to get out, contact the proper authorities. We always have a backup and have safety plans and we have resources to call to get help," Scott said.

Both Scott and Winchell said people living along the river are familiar with flooding and many residents commonly use boats to get to dry land.

"We're finding out that [residents] are getting overconfident," Scott said. "It is deceiving, most of the boats are not made for the debris or do not have powerful enough engines and are not trained in swift waters. You also have to have proper equipment. We have cold weather emergency suits. In this weather, it doesn't take

long to get hypothermia."

Howard Greninger can be reached at (812) 231-4204 or howard.greninger@tribstar.com.

Road warning

- A ban on oversize and overweight vehicles on State Road 154 between Hutsonville, Ill., and Graysville is in place until river levels have receded.
- INDOT officials are also asking motorists to slow down as they cross the bridge and levee area, as it adds stress to the already weakened levee.
- INDOT encourages drivers to turn around when encountering a flooded roadway. Six inches of standing water is enough to cause passenger cars to stall and a foot of water will float many vehicles.

[Back to Terre Haute](#)



Indiana Emergency Management officials reacts to local flooding.

Posted: Feb 11, 2008 04:07 PM EST

VIGO COUNTY, Ind - The Indiana Department of Homeland Security began surveying parts of the Wabash Valley on Monday.

Homeland security officials took to the skies to get a birds eye view of all the recent damage in Vigo County, then flew down to Sullivan County. Vigo County Emergency Management says if you're on the ground near a levee a persons perspective is limited. "From the air you get a very good picture of exactly what's been covered the levels of the water you just get a better understanding of the overall damage," said J.D. Kesler with Vigo County Emergency Management.

If you have had any damage from recent floods emergency management asks you to fill out a "Flood Damage Questionnaire". You find a link to the form on this page.

If you live in Vigo County, please send the questionnaire back to:

Vigo County Emergency Management

934 S 4th Street
Terre Haute, IN 47807

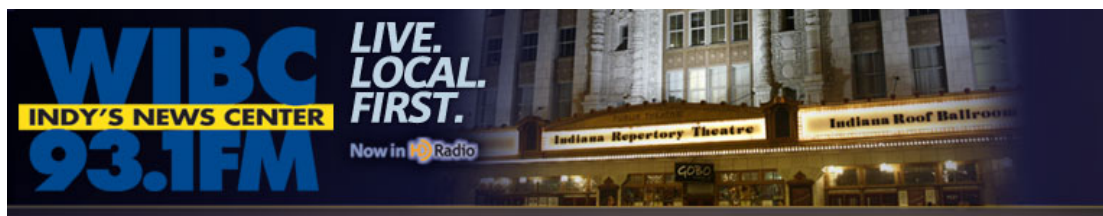
or E-Mail it back to: jdkesler@vigocounty.org

Fax it back: 812-234-0691

By: Jane Santucci

WTHI-TV

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Fire Destroys Businesses in Lawrenceburg

By Network Indiana

2/11/2008

Fire swept through downtown Lawrenceburg, Indiana Sunday afternoon, destroying several historic buildings.

One building caught fire and spread down the block, taking out as many as five businesses and causing smoke damage to several more. Eight families are now homeless.

The seven-alarm fire at one point had all departments in Dearborn County on the scene along with close to 100 firefighters.

Greendale Fire Lieutenant Shannon Craig says below freezing temperatures, ice, and wind made the fire difficult to battle.

At least one firefighter was hurt from falling on the ice and a woman who lived in one of the apartments suffered a heart attack after escaping the blaze.

As of this morning, a cause has not been issued but could come as soon as today. The state fire marshal is leading the investigation. Early damage estimates are in the millions.

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